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Singer's chance nearly 'flu' away

MURRAY HEAD
Was disillusioned

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ
of The Gazette

Murray Head's concert at Place des Arts earlier this week was both a debut and a comeback. And the circumstances behind the show — including a bout of the flu — made it quite out of the ordinary.

It was the headlining debut for the British actor-songwriter, who previously starred in such films as 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' and 'The Family Way,' as well as the blockbuster record, 'Jesus Christ Superstar.' He had also played openers for a British Elton John tour last year, but the Salle Wilfrid Pelletier date was his first American headlining engagement.

Montreal was chosen as his stage, not only because more copies of Head's first album have been sold here than anywhere else. The moodie song, 'Say It Ain't So Joe,' has made him a superstar here, and his concert was sold-out a week in advance (giving rise to a return engagement later this month).

However, Head may not have attempted the stage performance were it not for the efforts of local empresario Ruben Fogel and associate Larry Geary.

"I was flattered and totally amazed that they would have confidence in me to fill the theatre," says the 31-year-old actor-singer. "I was thinking of packing it in, because I had gotten a bit disillusioned. I hate planning and projections, and after five or six prospects had fallen through at the last minute, I was saying to myself, 'Maybe this is a sign'. It must be because maybe I just don't have it."

The Montreal gig gave Head a new lease on life. Five weeks ago he was under the impression that he could not draw 500 people in London, but here was a phone call from Geary saying that he could fill Place des Arts.

"I'm actually leaving Montreal with a few dollars to show for it," Head says. "I am by no means a superstar, so there are financial pressures at home. I mean, I've gotta make a living just like everyone else. But apart from the bread thing, I figured I had something to prove."

However, complications set in quickly. He arrived in town a week before Monday night's show to rehease with a group of all-local musicians — a difficult enough task, since it takes about three weeks to break in any band.

Three days after arrival, Head developed a serious flu that affected his throat, nose and ears. It got to the point that on the day of the concert, he could hardly hear and was ordered by doctors not to say a word before he sang his first note.

Drug therapy

The doctors could do nothing for him because Head — who by his own admission has as much gall as he has non-confidence — likes to be treated by homeopathology (the treatment of a disease by drugs that — in a healthy person — would produce symptoms like those of the disease).

"It's just another form of medicine," Head said. "I've been on it for five years and I believe in it. Unfortunately, it hardly exists here."

Matters were made worse when an afternoon Montreal Symphony Orchestra concert prohibited Head's crew from setting up until 6 p.m. There was no sound check, so there was Head, in fevered state, standing by the sound console during the opening set by pianist-singer Paul Millns.

Predictably, Head's first couple of songs suffered from a few sound problems but he was able to ride over the rough spots.

Was sloppy

"The show was sloppy, but it was spontaneous, and that's what I'm after."

He was helped immeasurably by lead guitarist Jean Millaire (of Offenbach) and backup singer Sharon Ryun, who brought oohs and ahs to the audience with her soaring harmonies.

When asked if his acting training gives him an advantage in the art of rock performing, Head is quick to note. "Well, I really don't have any training. I'm just an incurable extrovert looking for a form in which to express myself.

"I do think acting has given me an advantage psychologically because I know how to handle a stage. I'm interested in presenting some individuality on stage, I must make contact with the audience at all costs."

This is why the current rock scene leaves him cold: "There's so much money spent on lighting and sound just so a group can provide an audience with exactly what they put on record. With all this equipment, there's less of an exchange with the audience. One has to find a way to push that energy back to the audience."

TV TODAY

CBFT (CBC) Montreal
WCAX (CBS) Burlington, Vt.
CFCM (CBC) Quebec
CKMI (CBC) Quebec
WPTZ (NBC) Plattsburgh, N.Y.
CBMT (CBC) Montreal
CHLT (TVA) Sherbrooke, Que.
WMTW (ABC) Poland Spring, Maine
CJOH (CTV) Cornwall
CABLE TV Montreal
Nat'l Cablevision Montreal
CFTM (TVA) Montreal
CBVT (CBC) Quebec
CFCF (CTV) Montreal
CIVM Montreal
WEZF (ABC) Burlington, Vt
ETV (PBS) Burlington, Vt
WCFE (PBS) Plattsburgh, N.Y.

Highlights: PBS repeats Roman drama

Those who missed the debut of 'I Claudius', a 13-part series on PBS last Sunday, can see it tonight at 10 p.m. The series concerns the grandeur and murderous intrigue which characterized Rome in its decline. This first episode deals with the reign of Claudius' grandparents the emperor Augustus and his scheming wife Livia. Livia, the power behind the throne of Augustus, will stop at nothing to put her political ambitions into effect. Derek Jacobi has the title role.

"Are there more revelations about RCMP wrong-doing to come?" is the question to be posed on CBC's 'Decision' at 10:30 p.m. The guest is Michael Decary, counsel to the Keable Commission looking into the RCMP record. Host is Gazette columnist L. Ian MacDonald.

'The Seven Faces of Doctor Lao' is fantasy-drama on CJOH at midnight. Tony Randal stars as an elderly Chinese magician, who by staging a circus in a small western town, manages to solve the town's problems. Special effects enthusiasts will be particularly impressed with what this film has to offer.

A war drama called 'Too Late the Hero' is the CFCF midnight movie. Michael Caine and Cliff Robertson star as two soldiers sent on an assignment involving a British-American mission against the Japanese during the Second World War. It turns out to be a suicide mission.

— Susan Marcovitz

11:45 La Météo
11:50 L'Actualité
11:55 CBS News
12:00 Fifi Brindacier
Young & the Restless
De tout de tous
To Say the Least
The Bob McLean Show
Informa-bloc
The Better Sex
The Flintstones
12:20 Midi-nouvelles
12:25 Farm Market Report
12:30 Les coqueluches
Search for Tomorrow
Chico & the Man
Diner chaud
Ryan's Hope
Cartoon Party
It's Your Move
12:55 CBC News
1:00 News & Weather
Diner chaud
The Gong Show
Movie—Drama
Gang War. ('62) S. Kelly, S. Sullivan.
Tattletales
All My Children
Medical Center
Definition
1:10 Across the Fence
1:30 Téléjournal
As the World Turns
Days of Our Lives
Magistrate's Court
Cinema—Drame historique
De Mayerling à Sarajevo. ('39) Edwige Feuillère, J. Lodge.
Parlons français III
McGowan & Co.
1:35 Femme d'aujourd'hui
1:45 Les Oraliens
2:00 Cinema—Policier
Scotland Yard contre X. ('61) Stewart Granger, Bernard Lee.
Ryan's Hope
$20,000 Pyramid
The Alan Hamel Show
Guests: Actor Norman Fell, actress Jane Seymour, actor Paul Shaffer, singer Tony DeFranco.
Les 100 tours de centour
2:30 Cinéma—Aventures
Tripoli. ('50) John Payne, Maureen O'Hara, Howard Da Silva.
The Guiding Light
The Doctors
The Edge of Night
One Life to Live
Sunrunners III
The Age of Uncertainty
2:45 Surville
3:00 Another World
Take 30
3:15 Pourquoi pas?
General Hospital
Eve mémoire
Services à la communauté
3:30 All In The Family
Dessins animés
Celebrity Cooks
Singer Rhonda Bates prepares Fusili.
La maisonnée
Lilias, Yoga & You
3:45 Chez Cou Cou
4:00 Bobino
The Winners
First of a monthly series of dramatic specials for young viewers. Today: Mobile Maidens. A story of three young girls in California and their plan to distribute surplus foods to the poor. (30 min.)
Tourlou-Tourne
The Brady Bunch
Vision On
Curves.
Monsieur Tranquille
Bewitched
I Dream of Jeannie
Documentaires
The Pink Panther
Edge of Night
Sesame Street
4:30 Grujot et délicat
Gunsmoke
Les nouveaux tannants
The Partridge Family
What's New
Bewitched
Match Game '77
Merv Griffin Show
5:00 L'Heure de pointe
Emergency I
Mary Tyler Moore Show
Marketplace
Emergency
La Tournee
The Price is Right
Mr. Rogers
5:30 Gomer Pyle
Parle Parle, Jase Jase
Tattletales
All In the Family
Newscircle
The Electric Company
6:00 Ce soir
Channel 3 News Hour
Eyewitness News
The City at Six
ABC News
Newsline
Bonjour la vie
Pulse
Zoom
6:30 Aujourd'hui
NBC News
Entre nous
Marty Robbins Show
Un p'tit coup de coeur
Le Dix vous informe
Star Trek
As We See It
An exploration of San Francisco schools through the eyes of Asian-American students.
Studio See
7:00 Un pays, un goût, une manière
CBS News
Symphorien en rappel
The Odd Couple
Around the City with Bob
Mary Tyler Moore Show
Movie—Drama
The Blue Knight. ('73) The daily routine of a Los Angeles policeman as he considers marriage or remaining on the force. With William Holden, Lee Remick and Sam Elliott.
Funny Farm
La publicité au Québec
The MacNeil Lehrer Report
7:30 Du tac au tac
The Price Is Right
Les ennuis de Marie
Name that Tune
Reach for the Top
Semi-finals: St. Thomas vs. West Hill.
New Adventures of Wonder Woman
Bien dans sa peau
Green Acres
Vermont Report
Journey Into Art
8:00 Le travail à la chaîne
The Waltons
L'union fait la farce
Chips
The Green Thumb Burglar. Jon and Ponch (Larry Wilcox and Erik Estrada) pursue a careening car to ticket the crazy driver only to discover H.R. Pufnstuf behind the wheel, but Ponch convinces Jon that H.R. is a national treasure and they only give him a warning.
Carol Burnett Show
Des idées, des pays, des hommes
Welcome Back, Kotter
Once Upon a Classic
The Legend of Robin Hood. Part six.
8:30 Cinéma—Drame
Le secret. ('74) Jean-Louis Trintignant, Philippe Noiret, Solange Pradel.
Cinéma—Science-Fiction
Les évadés de la planète des singes. ('71) Kim Hunter, Roddy McDowell, Bradford Dillman.
Dean Martin Celebrity Roast
Don Haggerty is the guest of honour.
What's Happening!!
Life Around Us
Antarctica — Because It's There. A look at life in the world's least hospitable continent.
Wodehouse Playhouse
9:00 Hawaii Five-O
James at 15
Chips
Canadian Express
The Love Boat
The Best of Families
The Election. Teddy Wheeler supports political novice Teddy Roosevelt in the mayoral election of 1886, but machine politics triumph, showing the pervasive influence of Tammany Hall on many aspects of city life.
9:30 CTV Reports
Mediterranée
10:00 Barnaby Jones
Barnaby becomes the captive of a group of hoodlums planning an armored car holdup.
Rosetti & Ryan
Charles Aznavour Special
We've Got Each Other
Redd Foxx Show
Masterpiece Theatre
I, Claudius. Claudius recalls a magnificent banquet attended by his grandmother Livia and her husband, the Emperor Augustus.
Evening at Symphony
10:30 Téléjournal
Les nouvelles TVA
Decision
Nouvelles du monde Germanique
11:00 Channel 3 Nightbeat
La Météo
Eyewitness News
National News
Informa 7
News Final
La couleur du temps
Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman
Dick Cavett Show
Captioned ABC News for the Deaf
11:05 Cinéma—Policier
Columbo: Double choc, starring Peter Falk as Lt. Columbo. Also features Martin Landau, Tim O'Connor and Paul Stewart.
11:15 Cinéma—Drame
Dernier rivage. ('59) Gregory Peck, Fred Astaire, Ava Gardner.
11:22 Merv Griffin Show
Guests: Robert Klein, Chita Rivera.
The City Tonight
Nightline
Pulse
11:25 Cinéma—Comédie
Dis-moi qui tuer. ('66) Michèle Morgan, Paul Hubschmidt.
11:30 Movie—Drama
Stalk the Wild Child. ('76) Psychologists attempt to "reprogram" a boy who was raised in the woods by wolves. With David Janssen, Trish Van Devere, Joseph Bottoms and Ben Bottoms.
Tonight Show
Police Story
The Other Side of the Fence. A police officer poses as a fence in an effort to get evidence to arrest a pair of jewel thieves suspected of murder. George Hamilton, David Groh and Glenn Corbett guest star.
Dick Cavett Show
11:35 90 Minutes Live
12:00 Movie—Comedy/Fantasy
The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao. ('64) A western town is brought to its senses by an elderly Chinaman's traveling circus. With Tony Randall, Arthur O'Connell and Barbara Eden.
Movie—Drama
Too Late the Hero. ('70) Second World War story about two reluctant soldiers who are sent on a suicide mission. With Michael Caine, Cliff Robertson and Henry Fonda.
12:30 Cinéma—Drame
Sur les quais. ('54) Marlon Brando, Eva Marie Saint, Karl Malden, Lee J. Cobb, Rod Steiger.
Thursday Night Special
Academy of Country Music Awards. Pat Boone and Patti Page are the co-hosts. Performers include Freddy Fender, Ronnie Milsap, Don Williams, Donna Fargo and Mel Tillis.
1:00 Tomorrow Show
Kojak
2:00 Mannix
Cold Trail. Mannix investigates a professional kidnap plot.
Le Dix vous informe
2:30 Téléjournal

RADIO TODAY

3:34 p.m. (CBC-FM) Playhouse presents episode six of 'Bandit and the Mayor' a seven-part comedy written by David Harriman and Arthur Samuels.

8:30 p.m. (CBC-AM) Jazz Radio-Canada features the Guido Basso Quintet with Rob McConnell from Camp Fortune in Ottawa as part of the CBC Ottawa Festival. The Ron Paley Rehearsal Band in Studio session from Winnipeg.

9:04 p.m. (CBC-FM) Special Occasion presents a jazz concert by pianist Keith Jarrett, recorded at the Stratford Festival.

11:00 p.m. (CJFM-FM) Words & Music features Rita Coolidge and Kris Kristofferson.

11:00 p.m. (CFQR-FM) Jazz Nocturne presents the music of Les McCann then and now.

11:20 p.m. (CBC-AM) Nightcap features an interview with author Joseph Heller, who has written Catch 22 and Something Happened. He compares and contrasts the themes of his two books.

UPI

Charlie's hitchhikers

Twenty-five cars passed Kate Jackson (left) and Jaclyn Smith who were hitchhiking near their 'Charlie Angels' set before one driver realized they were TV stars. The women accepted a ride around the corner to the delight of a helpful school car pool.

Half-full house cheers Cranston's fine show

By JULIA MASKOULIS
of The Gazette

Toller Cranston is a free-style skating champion — the world's best — and an Olympic bronze medalist.

The local organizers of his Toller Cranston Ice Show seem to be also-rans. They will win no medals for their publicity campaign — judging by last night's attendance. They have seemingly lost out to the always-professional ice Capades people, due her next week.

It's a shame, because they are stiffling a very fine young performer and his excellent show.

The Toller Cranston show opened at the Velodrome last night — part of a Canadian tour that will take it to 36 cities and about 75 performances. The seats in the Velodrome were over half empty yesterday at opening night, but the some 2,000 people who were there obviously knew why they had come, and were profuse with their applause.

Cranston, who danced only five of the shows 36 numbers, has been compared lately to the ballet dancer Rudolph Nureyev. The comparison does not stand.

Toller Cranston is not Nureyev on ice. He is Toller Cranston, and his name and style are good enough to stand on their own.

The show, which is on at the Velodrome through Nov. 13 (two shows on Nov. 11, 12 and 13) is a sophisticated, and highly polished evening of skating for adults. It is simple without props of any kind, focusing the audiences' full attention on the esthetics of the ever-popular sport — or art — of ice skating.

Cranston, 28, a native Montrealer, is the show's originator — but he is not the only ice-skating champion in the show. Most of his agile selection of nymphs and nymphets that glide past us in technicolor performing incredible triple and quadruple mid-air leaps, are also champions of one kind or another.

There were several slip-ups at last night's performance — Cranston fell twice — but opening nights are always a little difficult. And the falls do not reflect on the quality of the show.

Some of the most enjoyable performances came from the team of Mark and Janet Hominuke, who performed several duets — all of them quite enchanting.

Besides Cranston, there were also several other male soloists. Gordon McKellen Jr., and Bob Rubens were two that stood out for their performances.

Watching the show from a distance, most of it in blue and green lighting, reminded one of watching fish gliding in an enormous fishtank. The speed and streamlined movements of the dancer-skaters, who performed among their selections a charleston, a tango and rock-on-ice, was not only entertaining but heightened one's awareness of how difficult this art form is.

Crowd eats up tenor's act

By BOB MONTGOMERY
for The Gazette

Tenor George Coulombe sang to a large and enthusiastic audience last evening at the Intermezzo recital at Theatre Maisonneuve. His program was long, extending more than 30 minutes beyond normal length for the Intermezzo series, containing Italian and French art songs and opera airs.

Much of the repertoire was well-suited to Coulombe's straightforward interpretations, but the non-operatic songs were treated in a too simplistic manner to be at their best. Nevertheless, the audience — his audience — ate it all up, and would have kept him all night had it been possible.

Coulombe's strength is his ability to milk one or two phrases of a song for all they are worth to make a single stunning impression. For a few phrases the song might soar or be superbly dramatic, but the rest would be short-breathed and fragmented.

Schubert's 'Serenato Medievale' lent itself well to the single climax treatment as did 'Les oiseaux dans le soir' by Eric Coates and Grieg's 'En Route.' As with several other songs they were convincingly put forth.

'Ninon' by Massenet had some particularly well-formed lines and the changes from recitative to song were subtly done with excellent collaboration from accompanying pianist, Jeannine Lachance. For Buzzi-Peccia's 'Lolita,' Coulombe was strong and outgoing, singing with great spirit, and balancing melodic peakes carefully to give a fine over-all effect.

Many pieces suffered from too simplistic a treatment except for the rather artificial sensationalizing of one or two moments. Notably affected were Fauré's 'A près un rêve' and Duparc's 'Chanson tristre.' The final phrase of the latter was unbelievably overdone.

Coulombe has a pleasant-sounding voice and has good control over a small sound that often seems to be held in his mouth. Even with this sound, there is a good measure of loud-soft contrast and a fine ability to carry forth a melodic line.

A full range of tone color is not to be heard though, and many songs suffered from to little variety. But even then, Coulombe's strong sense for simple large effect and his great sense for playing to an audience made up for vocal shortcomings.

Styx is just loud sound but Montreal fans love it

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ
of The Gazette

Ask anyone who Styx is and they will reply 'who?' Tell them that Styx has sold 750,000 copies of their 'Grand Illusion' album and they won't believe you.

The proof was in the pudding last night at the Forum, where 15,000 fans turned out to see the group perform its voluminously magical sound.

This is a Chicago group that plays the British sound — and the British sound is tops in this town. The sound is loud, trigger-charged and as intense as rehearsed intensity can be.

The fans go for this sound in a big way.

So they're not the Beatles. So everything they do is according to formula. So what if their romanticism is corny?

From 'Sweet Madame Blue' to 'Madamoiselle', they vault out with silly odes to love at high voltage. None of it is very poignent, but it is loud and that's what counts.

The powerful sound is made by the following culprits: Dennis DeYoung (keyboards, vocals), Tommy Shaw (guitar, vocals), James Young (guitar, vocals), Chuck Panozzo (bass), and John Panozzo (drums).

At times they sound like a record that has speeded up and is out of control. No matter, however, to be able to handle that kind of sound is 'heavy,' according to their fans. Just turn up the amps and let her rip — that's just about all there is to Styx's sound.

The opening act was Prism, another heavy group, this time from Vancouver. They had plenty going for them, most particularly volume. That's the key to success for the so-called 'heavy' groups: Make as much an impression as you can with a dense aural atmosphere. It's quite a formula if you can fool the fans. Styx have done it, and Prism may be next.

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